

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ANKARA 02469 021230Z

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 021144Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3484

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 2469

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR

SUBJECT: POPPY BAN

1. DURING APRIL 1 PRIVATE LUNCH AT EMBASSY RESIDENCE, FORMER PRIME MINISTER NIHAT ERIM SAID PRESIDENT KORUTURK, WHOM HE HAS SEEN THAT MORNING, HAD ASKED HIM TO GIVE ME A MESSAGE ON THE OPIUM PROBLEM.

2. THE PRESIDENT WANTED ME TO KNOW, ERIM SAID, THAT HE PLACED GREAT VALUE ON TURKEY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US AND WOULD GO TO GREAT LENGTHS TO PREVENT DAMAGE TO IT. HE INTENDED TO TRY TO INSURE THAT ANY OPIUM PRODUCTION WHICH WAS RESUMED WOULD BE SMALL, STRICTLY CONTROLLED, AND LIMITED TO STATE FARMS.

3. I EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE AND ASKED ERIM TO CONVEY THIS TO HIM. I STRESSED THAT USG WAS CONTINUING TO ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO OUR RELATIONS WITH TURKEY AND THAT IT WAS ENCOURAGING FOR US TO KNOW THAT HE WAS PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN THE PROBLEM. I FURTHER STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT THE US CONTINUED TO BE OPPOSED TO ANY GROWING OF POPPIES HERE, AND WE FEARED THAT ANY RETURN TO OPIUM PRODUCTION, EVEN OF THE MORE LIMITED KIND THE PRESIDENT WAS SUGGESTING, WOULD HAVE SERIOUS ADVERSE REPERCUSSIONS ON US-TURKISH RELATIONSHIPS. DCM SPAIN (ONLY OTHER PERSON PRESENT AT LUNCH) AND I THEN WENT OVER ALL THE BASIC ARGUMENTS WITH ERIM WE HAD BEEN MAKING TO THE GOVERNMENT. ERIM SAID HE WOULD REPORT OUR CONVERSATION BACK TO THE PRESIDENT WHO, HE SAID, WAS SURE TO BE A CONSTRUCTIVE ELEMENT IN THE

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PROBLEM.

4. COMMENT: PRESIDENT KORUTURK'S SUGGESTION RE PRODUCTION ON STATE FARMS MAY REFLECT CONVICTION THAT MATTERS HAVE ALREADY GONE TOO FAR HERE TO KEEP AN ABSOLUTE BAN. HOWEVER, THIS CONFIRMATION OF HIS PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE OPIUM PROBLEM IS ENCOURAGING. HIS PRESIDENTIAL POWERS IN THIS KIND OF SITUATION ARE NOT GREAT BUT HIS PERSONAL INFLUENCE WITH GOVERNMENT LEADERS IS NOT INSIGNIFICANT.
MACOMBER

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NNN

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